



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ONE MAN SENTENCED, ANOTHER FACES LIFE IN PRISON FOLLOWING CONVICTION IN METH CONSPIRACY

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that a Bolivar, Mo., man has been sentenced and a California man faces life imprisonment after being convicted in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

Rufus Wright, 36, of Bakersfield, Calif., was found guilty on Aug. 3, 2005, on charges contained in an Oct. 16, 2003, federal indictment. Co-defendant **Michael David Hankins**, 35, of the Bolivar, Mo., area, was sentenced before U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this morning to five years in federal prison without parole. **Hankins** pleaded guilty on Nov. 22, 2004, to his role in the meth conspiracy.

Following the presentation of evidence in **Wright's** trial, jurors deliberated less than an hour before returning a guilty verdict on both counts of the federal indictment, ending a trial that began Aug. 2, 2005. **Wright** was convicted of participating in a conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute in excess of 50 grams of methamphetamine in Greene County, Mo., from as early as July 25, 2003 to Aug. 6, 2003. **Wright** was also convicted of being in possession with intent to distribute in excess of 50 grams of methamphetamine in Newton County, Mo., on Aug. 6, 2003.

Wright and **Hankins** arranged for the transportation of methamphetamine from California to southwest Missouri, Graves said. **Wright** was arrested by law enforcement officers while returning to Joplin, Mo., from California, where he had traveled in order to purchase methamphetamine for re-sale in Missouri.

Under federal statutes, **Wright** could be subject to a sentence of life in federal prison without parole due to his prior felony narcotics convictions. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Kimberly R. Weber Dean. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Missouri State Highway Patrol and COMET (the Combined Ozarks Multi-jurisdictional Enforcement Team).

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow